

Why March 8, 2017 was Extra Significant for Philippine Women

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Manila — For Philippine women’s organizations, the 2017 commemoration of International Women’s Day was a critical action by and on behalf of Filipino women. As the March 8 statement signed by more than 30 organizations, including Focus on the Global South, said, “Filipino women from across all sectors have fought long and tough struggles—and have won many. In the past decades, we asserted for better working conditions for workers, pushed for lands for farmers and decent housing for the urban poor, fought and brought down a dictatorship, claimed our reproductive rights, and resisted sexual and other forms of violence against women.”

But it also underscored that, “...conditions around the world, and in particular, in Philippine society, are far from achieving gender equality and ending misogyny. Especially in these times when forces promoting patriarchal and anti-poor policies return to power.”

Indeed, women workers and from the urban poor communities (mainly in Tondo, one of the oldest districts in Manila populated mostly by informal settlers), which have been the main target of the Duterte government’s Tokhang or war on drugs, came out of their homes, had a noise barrage and marched towards the historic Plaza Miranda, where protesters have often converged for political actions. At Plaza Miranda they were met by other sectoral women’s organizations as expression of solidarity; the main message was to show that women were casting away fear that harassment, extrajudicial killings, and other forms of violence have instilled in them.

“Rice and roses, not violence. Land, livelihood, reproductive health service, gender-fair education, job security, not violence,” the women declared via speeches and banners.

March 8 has come and gone, but this is the promise the women made: “The Filipino women have persisted amidst all these challenges in the past. The Filipino women will not be cowed, not now, not ever. We shall always rise to the occasion to struggle and defend our victories; to further fight for and realize our rights. We shall not allow the forces of misogyny, of death, of all kinds of violence against women to overcome us.”

For the full statement, please go to ESSF (article 40496), [March 8, 2017 in the Philippines : Now more than ever is the time to march, resist, struggle!](#).

P.S.

* 09/Mar/2017:

<http://focusweb.org/content/why-march-8-2017-was-extra-significant-philippine-women>